

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/541,308

Amendment filed April 29, 2009

Reply to OA dated November 3, 2008

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 14, 15 and 18-27 are pending in this application, with claims 10, 11, 14, 15, 18-21 and 25-27 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 are amended herein. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 14, 15 and 18-27 will be pending, with claims 10, 11, 14, 15, 18-21 and 25-27 withdrawn from consideration. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of the rejections are respectfully requested.

No new matter has been introduced by this Amendment. Support for the amendments to the claims is detailed below.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 06-041609 in view of Svilar et al. (US 4,731,118) as stated in the Office action dated May 14, 2008. (Office action paragraph no. 3)

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested in view of the amendments to the claims. Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 have been amended to recite that the step of "sintering the green compact" is performed "in a hydrogen atmosphere containing nitrogen at a temperature of 1090 to 1300°C." Support for this amendment may be found, for example, at page 17, lines 12-14, of the specification. Applicant submits that the claims, as amended, are not obvious over Svilar '118.

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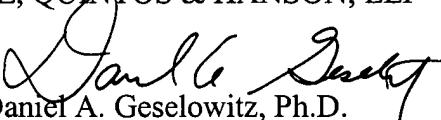
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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time
Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

H:\050\050390\Amendment accompanying RCE